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FOREIGN RADIO REACTIONS TO  
STALIN'S REPLIES TO KINGSBURY SMITH

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FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION BRANCH  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUMMARY\*

The Soviet Radio: To date, Radio Moscow has not issued a single monitored comment about Stalin's replies to Kingsbury Smith. Verbatim reports of the initial reply, however, have been broadcast repeatedly in practically all languages used by the Soviet radio--a record surpassing Moscow's coverage of any other single event since at least April 1947. And preliminary monitoring reports indicate that Moscow is giving widespread publicity to Stalin's 2 February reply to Smith's telegram.

Soviet-Controlled German and Satellite Radios: The Soviet-controlled German radio and press have given overwhelming attention to Stalin's initial reply, the Satellite radios considerably less. Two major themes are stressed, with insistent repetition, to the exclusion of practically all others: (1) the "fresh evidence of the Soviet Union's (allegedly historic) willingness to remove all obstacles to building up a lasting peace"; and (2) the final proof of American "warmongering" that will be revealed if Stalin receives a negative reply. Disproportionate emphasis appears to have been placed on driving home the latter point: "those who reject (Stalin's) fair offer will reveal themselves as warmongers"; if the U.S. refuses to accept Stalin's proposals, "then the whole world will know who is obstructing a peace settlement"; anyone who calls Stalin's statement "propaganda" is "quite obviously an enemy of peace and opposed to a peaceful settlement of postwar problems."

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\* This report covers all monitored foreign radio broadcasts received in Washington up to 7:00 a.m., 3 February 1949. As of this time, no monitored reactions to Stalin's 2 February reply to Smith's telegram have been received.

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Radios Outside the Soviet Orbit: Here, an equivalent volume of monitored attention to the Stalin statement has been received, most of it from countries in western Europe. The comment is subject to bi-polar variations; from the interpretation that Stalin is becoming milder to the statement that the Soviet attitude is stiffening; from Communist press laudations to unqualified negativism; from proposals for a Truman-Stalin meeting to outright rejections of such an idea.

The great bulk of the comment, however, takes no categorical position. Qualified skepticism, qualified hope, and caution about both the significance and sincerity of Stalin's statement are the rule. Considerable concern is expressed or implied about the possible impact of the statement on the Atlantic Pact and the Western Union, which are almost uniformly defended (again either implicitly or explicitly).

Among the various monitored suggestions as to the course of action that should be pursued in response to Stalin's statement there are few that recommend outright rejection. That Stalin's statement be given some form of serious consideration and response is the attitude of most; and several feel that this possible chance of peace (even though perhaps an outside one) should be given some sort of a trial.

To date, few monitored reactions to the officially expressed U.S. attitude about the Stalin statements have been received.

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THE SOVIET RADIO

The response of the Soviet radio to the initial Smith-Stalin interview has consisted of voluminous reporting of the interview itself. It has been given verbatim in practically all of Moscow's foreign-language beams, and on some beams (including Soviet Home Service broadcasts) at least three times within a few hours. It has also appeared, in record time, in the 1 February issue of the Cominform publication, FOR A LASTING PEACE, FOR A PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY. In sheer number of repetitions, no other single equivalent event since April 1947 (when FBIB began concentrated study of Soviet radio broadcasts) has received an equal amount of publicity in such a short time.

As often happens, however, Moscow has as yet refrained from comment, leaving this to Soviet-sympathizing sources. Some of these are quoted by the Soviet radio. And at least one Soviet Home Service broadcast has also reported the qualifiedly favorable reactions from other sources in the U.S. (such as Senator Connally's) and has noted that, according to UP, "the White House and State Department... received coolly the statement of... Stalin."

SOVIET-CONTROLLED GERMAN AND SATELLITE RADIOS

The volume of Soviet-controlled German radio and press attention to Stalin's reply to the four questions has been overwhelming. In contrast, few Satellite broadcasts on the subject have been monitored to date. (Among them, it is of interest that TANYUG, the official Yugoslav press service, dispatches an account of Wallace's interpretation that Stalin's statement "is a sign of hope for the whole world.")

a. The "Voice of Peace": Together with the Communist press in western Europe, the Soviet-controlled German and Satellite radios hail and describe Stalin's reply in terms such as the following: a "ray of light"; a "wide door to peace"; "a release from a nightmare"; "deeds of peace"; "fresh evidence of the Soviet Union's willingness to remove all obstacles to the building up of a lasting peace." Among others, Berlin commentator Michael Storm dramatizes the reply as "one of the most important statements pronounced since the end of the war":

"It is a long time since we have been able to observe scenes like these of this morning in Berlin. Newspapers were virtually torn out of the hands of the news vendors. Groups of people assembled around the newspaper kiosks. In the trams, in the factories, everywhere there were lively discussions. To judge by the reports of the news agencies, similar scenes occurred in Paris and Rome, New York and London. There is no doubt that even the politically indifferent people have for some time been subject to growing concern and tension: 'How are things to go on? What will happen?'"

And TÄGLICHE RUNDSCHAU (SMA organ in Berlin) notes that the world public has received Stalin's "positive replies" with "deep satisfaction. ... Those who are endeavoring to preserve peace and to maintain international harmony will welcome Stalin's statement."

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In support of the contention that Stalin's reply is further evidence of the Soviet "peace" policy, frequent references are made to previous Stalin statements about "peaceful coexistence" of differing economic and ideological systems.

Two items are of particular interest--if for no other reason than their uniqueness. One is a contrast drawn by Michael Storm between the "sharpness of the note of the Soviet Foreign Office in outlining the policy of the Western Powers and the readiness expressed in Stalin's interview to come to an understanding." Storm is the only monitored Soviet-controlled commentator to discuss this contrast, and even he explains it away. "In reality," he says, "these are merely two sides of one and the same fundamental problem. The note of the Soviet Foreign Office clearly outlined the problems of recent times, while the replies of Stalin show a way out of this dangerous atmosphere." (Later Storm also speaks of "the Soviet note to Norway (which) had proved that the time had passed once and for all when it was possible to draw a cordon sanitaire around the USSR.")

The other item of interest is a broadcast statement by Dr. Schwarze, Vice President of the Saxony-Anhalt Diet and member of the Saxony-Anhalt's LDP Executive. Emphasizing the importance of direct cooperation between the heads of the USSR and the U.S. Governments, Dr. Schwarze is reported by Soviet-controlled Berlin to have "declared that this could lead to a greater success for the preservation of peace than month's-long discussions on a lower level--as the influence of warmongers would be felt there in the case of the Western Powers." (Though not explicitly declaring that President Truman is not himself a "warmonger," this would appear to be implied by the form of the statement.)

b. "Those Rejecting Stalin's Offer Will Reveal Themselves as Warmongers": The content of Soviet-controlled German and Satellite radio commentaries is not limited to mere accentuation of the Soviet "peace" policy as indicated by this "fresh evidence of Soviet willingness to remove all obstacles to... a lasting peace." In fact, in terms of volume of broadcast attention, they appear more concerned with spelling out a propaganda base for subsequent attacks on U.S. policy in the event of negative reaction to Stalin's statements. For example:

"Those who reject his (Stalin's) fair offer will reveal themselves as warmongers. They will, however, notice that the authority of the Soviet Union and of Stalin in particular, as principal defender of world peace, will have gained even more respect." (from the Dutch Communist DE WAARHEID as reported by the Dutch radio at Hilversum)

"The answers have put before the Western Powers either the decision to show by deeds and facts their willingness to come to an understanding with the Soviet Union and thus to put an end to the international tension which they have created, or again to demonstrate to the whole world their determination to continue in the policy of preparing aggression." (from Prague's Communist RUDE PRAVO as reported by CTK, the official Czechoslovak press service)

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"The U.S. will have to reply to Stalin's declarations. And from this reply, it will be possible to judge whether the predominant circles of that country intend to stick to their plans for world conquest or whether they are ready to come to an understanding which would be welcomed also by the American people." (Michael Storm over Soviet-controlled Berlin)

If the U.S. refuses to accept Stalin's proposals, "then the whole world will know who is obstructing a peace settlement." (SMA's TAEGLICHE RUNDSCHAU as reported by Soviet-controlled Berlin)

"Up to now, a Soviet concession had always been called the only prerequisite for the settlement of all differences between the U.S. and the USSR. ... 'The Russians must make the first move.' This has now been done. And the whole world now calls on the Western Powers to play the game. ... The people want to know for certain whether their suspicion was justified that certain war profiteers were out for profits and had entrusted 'certain governments' with the task of creating the pre-conditions." (NATIONAL ZEITUNG, as reported by Soviet-controlled Berlin)

Nor do these commentaries overlook a chance to attack "the enemies of peace, the propagandists and incendiaries of a new war (who) are trying to minimize its (Stalin's statement) significance" (TAEGLICHE RUNDSCHAU). While official U.S. statements have not yet been noted in monitored broadcasts from Soviet-controlled Germany and the Satellites, "the expressed readiness of the Soviet Government to arrive at a comprehensive settlement" is said to have "obviously been 'very embarrassing' to those who wanted to provoke a new world war, especially as war preparations had started so promisingly. Hence, it was necessary for them to besmirch Stalin's offer" (BERLINER ZEITUNG as reported by Soviet-controlled Berlin). And TAEGLICHE RUNDSCHAU offers the idea that as for those who speak of Soviet propaganda, "the simplest way of refuting Soviet propaganda is to accept Stalin's proposals and to sign a Soviet-U.S. peace declaration, to postpone the formation of a west-German Government, to call the Foreign Ministers Council, and to agree to a Truman-Stalin meeting."

#### RADIOS OUTSIDE THE SOVIET ORBIT

Considered together, the radio and press outside the Soviet orbit, especially those in western Europe, appear to have given almost as much publicity to the initial Stalin statements as did the Soviet radio. In contrast to the latter, however, they are rife with speculation and comment. While most of this can be grouped into the pattern indicated by the following sub-headings, there is occasional wide diversity: from the Turkish TANIN's observation that "Stalin is gradually becoming milder in the face of the realistic Truman," for example, to Pertinax' interpretation in FRANCE SOIR that Stalin's statement represents a stiffening of the Soviet attitude. Also, for example, while most comment avoids any prediction of the American response, Rome's MESSAGGERO comes out flatly, according to the Rome radio, with the "certainty that President Truman will do nothing which could be interpreted as a refusal of the offer."

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a. "Skepticism... Prudence... Caution... No Exaggerated Hopes...": Skeptical acceptance of the conciliatory tone of Stalin's reply to Smith's four questions characterizes the overwhelming majority of monitored western Europe broadcast references to the Stalin-Smith exchange. Says Rome, for example: "first reactions... were reserved and cautiously expectant. No exaggerated hopes are placed on practical developments." Such reservations mark monitored broadcasts from London, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Berne, Melbourne, Stockholm, Ankara, and radios in the western zones of Germany. Stalin's reply is frequently termed such things as a "diplomatic maneuver," "a rhetorical appeal," "a spectacular gesture," "a cacophonous instrumentation."

Many of the broadcast statements examine the reply in the light of the Soviet note to Norway regarding the North Atlantic Pact, or in the light of Soviet policy on Berlin. The two sides of Soviet policy are said to be "contradictory" only at first glance; in reality, it is claimed, they are "parts" of a whole, "complementary." Commentators and broadcast editorials resort to varied similes and metaphors in their attempts to characterize the "maneuver" precisely. Paris quotes *CE MATIN LE PAYS* which characterizes the reply as "an excellent example... of the diplomat's art which consists in alternating the dagger with chocolate"; *LES ECHOS* is said to have compared the "new coup" to a "move in a game of chess." London quotes the *DAILY MAIL* as believing the reply to be another instance of Stalin's familiar resort to "words," while "his emissaries throw monkey wrenches into the peace machinery." Berne reports that Swiss papers describe the maneuver in meteorological or musical terms: the Berne *DER BUND* is said to refer to Soviet maneuvers as "political April weather" in which "sunshine follows thunder"; while *DIE TAT* claims that Stalin plays "softly on the flute while using his feet on the drum." Berne also interprets the move as part of Moscow's "shock system" for the treatment of the western powers: "cold showers are followed by warm ones at long intervals."

Monitored broadcasts "explain" the seeming divergencies in Soviet policies on grounds ranging from "tension" in the Kremlin to a desire for a lull during which Soviet gains in Europe and Asia may be consolidated. In an early analysis, the London commentator Gordon Waterfield, develops a theoretical explanation:

"Mr. Stalin conducts two diplomacies. One is based on the Marx-Lenin-Stalin theory of history and revolution, the enduring and fundamental policy. The other diplomacy for the market places of the world is propaganda diplomacy carried on through interviews with journalists and through speeches delivered by the Soviet delegation at the United Nations."

Other monitored broadcasts explain Stalin's statement on the basis of specific, current developments.

1. The Atlantic Pact and/or Western Union: A number of press and radio commentators adduce that Stalin was motivated by a desire "to hamper the effort to form a western union" (*LE POPULAIRE*), or to "present the Atlantic Pact as something which is unnecessary." (*SVENSKA DAGBLADET*) Similar expressions are found in BBC's quotations from the *DAILY MAIL* and *DAILY TELEGRAPH*, in Ernest

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Watkins' commentary, and in a statement by Berlin's LDP chairman Schwennige. Paris quotes LE JOURNAL DE GENEVE, LE POPULAIRE, L'AUREOLE, L'INTRANSIGEANT, and FRANCE SOIR. HUMANITE, however, is quoted as specifically denying any connection between western cooperation and the Stalin exchange. DENA, U.S.-zone German press service, quotes the Munich SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG as asserting "Stalin's interview reveals genuine anxiety about the rallying of the west" and a "psychologically favorable" time for it "coincides" with Russian censure of the Atlantic Pact. Radio Melbourne quotes Robert Menzies and Anglo-American diplomats as believing the move was a reflection of Soviet distrust of western unity. Ankara cites TASVIR as noting the coincidence of the interview with the Soviet "warning" to small nations about the Atlantic Pact; while CUMHURIYET interprets the move to mean that Stalin wants to "slow down measures of defense."

2. West German State: The alleged connection between Stalin's reply to Smith and the impending stabilization of the German situation is pointed out by Baden Baden; by Madrid quoting "London observers"; by Helsinki, also quoting "London diplomatic circles"; by London, quoting the YORKSHIRE POST; by Paris, quoting "diplomatic circles" and Ernst Reuter; by DENA, quoting STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN, and by Mexico in an "editorial note" analyzing Stalin's replies.

3. "Tension" in the Kremlin: Opinions vary over the possibility that the interview might have been occasioned by "nervousness in the Kremlin." London quotes the BIRMINGHAM POST as declaring "it would be foolish to read into Mr. Stalin's answers evidence of nervousness in the Kremlin." On the other hand, the British-zone German press service reports that according to the Berlin DER TAG, "Moscow had certain reasons really to seek a way out of the steadily growing tension"; and according to AFP, the Basle NATIONALZEITUNG reports that "Stalin's gesture is thought to be a symptom of internal tension in Russia." The Paris radio cites LA VIE FINANCIERE to the effect that difficulties in replacing worn-out equipment in eastern Germany and in meeting foreign contracts for the delivery of Russian wheat, since the "wheat crop is seriously endangered by atmospheric conditions," are among the causes of possible Soviet uneasiness.

4. A Delaying Tactic: AFP reports that LE JOURNAL DE GENEVE noted that "the USSR wishes to gain time," while LE POPULAIRE thinks the interview "probably means that the USSR is thinking of consolidating its position." The Havana radio declares that the Soviet Union "will dedicate itself to the digestion of the advantages achieved in Asia, and afterwards will return more energetically to the original objective of the domination of Europe."

b. "Deeds Rather than Words": The majority of the west-European radios and press appear united in their belief that the Soviet Union should demonstrate its peaceful intentions by "deeds rather than words." Brazzaville quotes the London Foreign Office as holding this point of view and similar expressions are attributed to spokesman or journal in Paris, Rome, the Netherlands, and Vienna. WIENER KURIER, London TIMES, and L'AUBE are also quoted as claiming Russia will have an opportunity to prove its sincerity when the Austrian treaty comes up for discussion later this month.



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c. Unequivocal Rejection: Among monitored foreign radio broadcasts to date, there have been at least three unequivocally negative statements about Stalin's reply to Smith's four questions. One of them comes from West Berlin's Oberburgermeister Reuter, who, according to the British-zone German press service said that he did not believe in a Soviet peace offensive--that "for tactical reasons, the Soviets were sure to prevaricate at times in order to obtain influence on and a share in the Ruhr." The second appears in Madrid radio commentary characterizing the reply as "merely a propagandist effort." The commentary further contends "that behind the Soviet propagandistic verbosity there is a latent reality--that of launching a war as soon as Russia is in a position to win it." And the third is represented by a London DAILY MAIL editorial identifying Stalin's tactics with those of Hitler's. As reported by the BBC, "the MAIL says Hitler deceived the democratic nations until it was too late to organize collective security; but the western nations have learned their lesson and are not to be taken in by Mr. Stalin."

d. What Should Be Done? Among various monitored suggestions as to the course of action that should be pursued in response to Stalin's statement, there are few that recommend outright rejection. That Stalin's statements be given serious consideration in the chance that they might offer some hope for world peace is the gist of several:

According to the BBC, the British DAILY EXPRESS "suggests that Mr. Stalin should be taken at his word and invited to meet President Truman and Mr. Attlee in London. ... There will have to be a meeting somewhere one day and Britain should never stop trying for it."

The Paris L'AUREORE-FRANCE-LIBRE states that "whether it be a trap or not the new attitude adopted by the Kremlin should be taken into account. ...even if (Moscow's) intentions are not sincere, the fact that Moscow thinks it should resort to cunning proves that the West is sufficiently strong to examine the Soviet demand. It should not run the danger of missing a chance, however uncertain it may be, of dispelling the uneasiness which weighs heavily on the civilized world."

The Stockholm radio reports that the Norwegian Premier expressed the opinion that "if such a meeting (as referred to by Stalin) was arranged, it could mean a great deal to humanity which had had enough of war and suffering."

According to the BBC, the British YORKSHIRE POST "welcomes Mr. Stalin's words as, at any rate, a show of conciliation and says we shall examine them closely for any chance of cooperation. They may be the last opportunity to stop a drift toward disastrous conflict. Britain is on her guard, but any real friendliness on Russia's part would be answered with friendliness by us."

And in the same BBC broadcast, the London NEWS CHRONICLE is reported to have said that "despite the enormous (differences) between Mr. Stalin's words and the deeds of his lieutenants, Mr. Stalin's overtures to the West cannot be laughed off or rejected in a cavalier fashion. They demand a response, and the Western Powers have always declared their readiness to negotiate with Russia to end the civil war provided this is not done

There are at least two suggestions implying that propaganda considerations should be taken into account in answering Stalin's advances.

Basle's NATIONALZEITUNG, for example, "considers that the Western Powers ought to answer the advances made by Stalin in some way, whatever their doubts as to the sincerity of his declarations. ...the Russian offers should be taken at face value so that they will not be able to throw the responsibility for the continuation of conflict in the eyes of the Russians on the Western Powers."

And, according to AFP, Carlos Romulo of the Philippines "urged that Stalin's peace feelers 'should be given earnest consideration.... The security and well-being of the world demand that every avenue to peace be explored. If the Stalin statement should prove to be a false lead, the U.S. will not be the loser for having pursued it in good faith and exposed it for the deliberate deception that was intended to be."

The Paris FRANC TIREUR considers that "it is for the governments concerned... to ask questions in turn and to make concrete proposals... in order to bring about more specific answers by Stalin as well."

A general meeting, to include the heads of state of other countries concerned, is suggested by Istanbul's TASVIR. "Such a meeting," concludes the paper, "should be the center of a general peace conference." And the conservative FIGARO cautions against undertaking any talks with Moscow "without making the Kremlin clearly understand that this acceptance is not a manifestation of weakness and without stating at the same time that there can be no question of giving up a vigorously defensive policy which the Soviets themselves imposed upon the West...." The rightist L'EPOQUE, going even further in this direction, thinks that although "Stalin's appeal is of the type which will be difficult not to answer,... the best answer... is to make the Atlantic Pact a reality."

The only suggestion of a "plague on both your houses" appears in the Paris COMBAT (independent, moderate) which does "not know what will happen now that Stalin has made an offer. But the two big powers would do well to stop singing in the lobbies. A time will come when nations will no longer lend them an ear." COMBAT also considers that "it is no longer up to Stalin to make the next gesture. Let us hope that the response will not disappoint the men of good will."

e. Reactions to Official U.S. Attitude: To date, among countries outside the Soviet orbit, monitored foreign radio reactions to the American attitude toward Stalin's statements have been received from only the London and Paris radios. On 2 February, a BBC commentary, explaining the relationship of propaganda to diplomacy and noting the coincidence of Stalin's statements with the pending negotiations for conclusion of the Atlantic Pact, observes that "Mr. Acheson's comments today made it clear that he is not satisfied at all that Mr. Stalin's answers to the questions put to him mark any significant change in the international situation. ... Thus, if Mr. Stalin's statements were a propaganda device, they have failed in their purpose so far as the U.S. Administration is concerned. If they were not a mere propaganda device, it is still open to Mr. Stalin to support his words by deeds."

French reaction appears in a Paris press review of 2 February:

"COMBAT writes that 'the U.S. keeps to her point of view which is that negotiations with the USSR will make no difference to the Atlantic Pact. ... The apparent stiffening of the State Department's attitude toward Russia should of course not be taken too literally. For the time being, Dean Acheson is trying to reassure the western nations and to administer a proof of the continuity of U.S. policy.'"

CE MATIN LE PAYS considers the "negative answer to Stalin" as a reflection of the State Department's belief "that it will be time to begin direct negotiations with the Kremlin when the European balance of power is restored."

LIBERATION (leftist), on the other hand, "regrets that Britain and the U.S. have said 'no.' 'We cannot,' it says, 'help being astounded on hearing that Stalin's conciliatory declaration, the third in a space of two years, has been brushed aside because it was not made in the accepted way. Where do the Anglo-Saxons want to get? Do they prefer the Atlantic Pact which contains the germ of war or a freely discussed and loyally accepted peaceful agreement. Can't they visualize peace otherwise than as an atomic peace.'"